

DEC 01 2006

Application No. 10/507,405
Amendment dated
Reply to Office Action of September 1, 2006

Docket No.: 209546-84419

REMARKS

Claims 4 and 5 are pending in this application. Claim 4 is amended to further clarify that the hinge portion connecting the pillar air duct to the headliner air duct resides between the pillar air duct and the headliner air duct and should be read as a positive limitation. Based on the action dated September 1, 2006, Applicant infers that the foregoing hinge portion between the ducts was not properly considered. Favorable reconsideration is respectfully requested in light of the following remarks.

35 U.S.C. § 102(b)

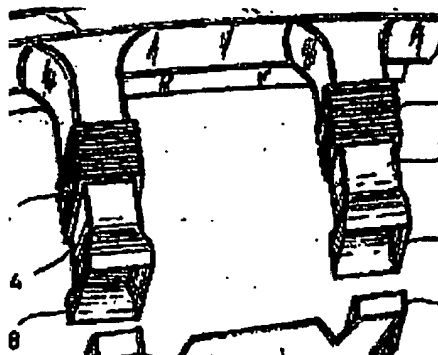
The Office action rejected claims 4-5 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over Werth (DE 3510336) ("Werth"). In light of the following remarks, the rejection is respectfully traversed.

None of the references of record, alone or in permitted combination, disclose, teach or suggest a headliner ventilation system for a vehicle comprising a headliner air duct, a pillar air duct integrally formed and in fluid communication with said headliner air duct, and a flexible hinge portion defining an integral joint between the headliner air duct and the pillar air duct that permits the selective positioning of said headliner ventilation system between a compact state and an extended state.

Respectfully, Applicant submits that the Action construes the Werth reference too liberally. Among other things, the Action notably ignores Applicant's limitation that requires that the pillar air duct is in fluid communication with the headliner air duct *by a flexible hinge portion* arranged between the pillar air duct and the headliner air duct. By contrast, the Werth reference illustrates a flexible portion provided on one of the ducts exclusively, and this flexible portion is not provided between the ducts. As seen in the Figure below (reproduced from the Werth reference), not one of the ducts are connected to another duct *by a flexible hinge portion* that defines a joint. In stark contrast, the ducts are rigidly connected to one another.

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Applicant's specification teaches that by positioning the *flexible hinge portion 18* *between the pillar air duct and the headliner air duct*, the headliner ventilation system can be positioned into a compact state for storage or transport by folding the pillar air duct over the headliner air duct. (Page 2, Description of the Preferred Embodiment, 2nd Paragraph) This compact state is specifically shown in Figure 3 of Applicant's specification, which is reproduced below (in pertinent part) for convenience.

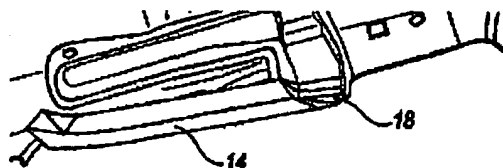


FIG. 3

Upon installation, the flexible hinge portion 18 located *between the pillar air duct and the headliner air duct* allows the pillar air duct to be moved into an extended state. (Page 2, Description of the Preferred Embodiment, 2nd Paragraph) This state is shown in Figure 2 of Applicant's originally filed specification, which is reproduced below (in pertinent part) for convenience.

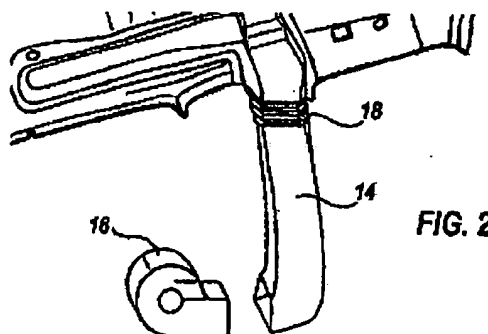


FIG. 2

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The Werth reference does not yield the ability to move the air duct in the compact state as accomplished and claimed by Applicant's invention. That is, by positioning a flexible hinge between the headliner air duct and the pillar air duct, Applicant recites inventive structure that allows movement into such a compact state.

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. Favorable consideration and prompt allowance of the application is earnestly solicited. However, if such allowance is not permitted based on additional art or the like, Applicant respectfully submits that any action issued in the present case should be non-final, as the previous action did not give due consideration to "the flexible hinge portion" element recited in claim 4 as originally submitted.

Applicant believes no fee is due with this response. However, if a fee is due, please charge our Deposit Account No. 50-3145, under Order No. 209546-84419 from which the undersigned is authorized to draw.

Dated: 12/1/2006

Respectfully submitted,

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